



## *LINCOLN CHAFEE* *U.S. SENATOR* *RHODE ISLAND*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT: Stephen Hourahan**  
**202-224-6167**

### **SENATOR CHAFEE ANNOUNCES GRANTS TO IMPROVE DNA TESTING AND RESEARCH**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee today announced three grant awards which will be used to improve DNA testing and research methods. The awards have been distributed by the U.S. Department of Justice to both the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and Brown University.

“Improving DNA technology is an important way to make our criminal justice system more effective,” Senator Chafee said. “I am also very happy to hear that funds have been awarded to reduce the existing backlog of DNA casework in Rhode Island, and that money also will be devoted to improving the system to eliminate future backups,” he continued.

First, Brown University will be awarded \$542,654 to study, design, and test new DNA sequencing methods using nanotechnology, which involves studying and working with matter on an ultra-small scale. One nanometer is one-millionth of a millimeter and a single human hair is around 80,000 nanometers in width. Current technology associated with the sequencing process is a time consuming endeavor that requires large sample sizes and excessive costs. Working with nanotechnology, Brown will allow for a faster, cheaper procedure which will also require a much smaller sample size. This will allow scientists to more effectively determine the base sequence order of an individual’s DNA, which is the process used to match DNA samples with those at crime scenes, etc.

Additionally, a total of \$281,271 has been awarded to RIDOH for two separate programs. The first, the DNA Capacity Enhancement Program, will receive \$150,539 for existing R.I. crime laboratories that conduct DNA analysis. The funds will be used to improve laboratory infrastructure and analysis capacity so that DNA samples can be processed efficiently and cost effectively. The improvements will reduce future DNA backlogs, helping the R.I. criminal justice system use the full potential of DNA technology.

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The second award is \$130,732 for the Forensic Casework DNA Backlog Reduction Program. The program provides funding to analyze backlogged forensic DNA casework samples from sexual assaults, homicides, and kidnappings, either in government-owned laboratories or through accredited fee-for-service vendors.

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